

stability and good governance,¹⁰⁴ and with other UN agencies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the UN Human Rights Office.¹⁰⁵

Resolution 2699 (2023) emphasizes that the Government of Haiti holds primary responsible for the provision of security and highlights the importance of a fully functioning police force. The scope of the MSS mission is thus limited and two-pronged. The mission aims to restore security in Haiti and assist the police in stabilizing the situation to pave the way for elections.¹⁰⁶ To achieve these aims, the mission is mandated to strengthen the HNP in its anti-gang operations, by increasing its capacity through the planning and execution of joint operations to ensure security for critical infrastructure and transit sites. The mission is further tasked with supporting the HNP in ensuring safe access for the population to humanitarian aid.¹⁰⁷ This should help to regain control over areas dominated by gangs and reduce human suffering.

The institutional vacuum and weak border controls in Haiti create a favourable environment for criminal exploitation. The growing scope of rural gangs has worsened food insecurity in Haiti, while urban gangs' obstruction of humanitarian assistance by blocking access to ports and roads has deepened the humanitarian crisis in the country. Roadblocks by gangs, punitively high illicit taxation and the theft of goods are preventing people from accessing basic needs, including food.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, the scaling up of criminal activities in Haiti has the potential to create a ripple effect in transnational criminality across the broader region, driving up the demand for and trafficking of illicit firearms arms from Dominican Republic and Jamaica. This point was raised by the Panel of Experts in September 2023.¹⁰⁹

It is unclear, however, under which parameters joint operations will take place and how compliance with human rights obligations and other international requirements will be achieved during those operations.

Resolution 2699 (2023) also allows the adoption of urgent temporary measures on an exceptional basis to maintain law and order and public safety, including the arrest and detention of suspects.¹¹⁰ This essentially provides the MSS mission with the authority to arrest suspects to prevent the loss of life, within the limits of its capacities and objectives as set out in the resolution. In giving 'teeth' to the mission, this provision should be carefully designed within a clearly defined *modus operandi*, ahead of any attempt to implement it in the field. Alongside providing the mission with extensive executive powers, the resolution requires the prospective mission to build in broad human rights guarantees. For example, paragraph 7 stipulates the need to protect children and vulnerable groups, to include expertise in anti-gang and community oriented policing, a focus on the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and responses to it that are victim-centred. The resolution also encourages the representation of women at all levels of the mission.

As GI-TOC research has previously established, while women and girls face disproportionate risks of gang-related gender-based violence, gender-centred approaches to respond to the problem are lacking.¹¹¹ Some of the needs highlighted by the same study include involving women and girls in the identification of solutions to gender-based violence and building the capacity of institutions in which women can trust and create cross-sectoral collaboration to provide services that are tailored for women and girls.

The resolution establishes safeguards that clearly intend to avoid the problems that have beset several peacekeeping interventions. It establishes the need to take necessary action to ensure discipline and avoid sexual exploitation and abuse, through timely investigation of misconduct, the provision of an accountability mechanism and the repatriation of units credibly accused of misconduct (notably including alleged instances of widespread or systematic exploitation and abuse).



Road leading to Fort Jacques, Port-au-Prince, November 2023. Photo: Romain Le Cour Grandmaison/GI-TOC

Human rights approaches to the use of force are paramount to avoid creating further mistrust between communities, the HNP and the MSS mission. As emphasized in the Secretary-General's report, for the mission to be effective, it must gain the trust of the community on the ground.¹¹² To do this, the force must prevent human rights abuses and incidents of sexual exploitation. The mission must therefore adhere to clear human rights protocols and establish internal and independent oversight, which should extend to the participation of civil society and women.

The needs for transparency, accountability and oversight are further reinforced in paragraphs 10 and 11. Additionally, in paragraph 12, the resolution expressly requests the MSS mission to adopt an appropriate wastewater management strategy and other environmental controls to guard against the introduction and spread of water-borne disease.

Both MINUSTAH, and the subsequent justice support mission to Haiti, MINUJUSTH, were seen as highly controversial, beset by allegations of sexual misconduct by peacekeepers and viewed as negligent in the face of the spread of a cholera epidemic within the country's population.¹¹³ A repetition of any of those mistakes would clearly risk sparking resentment among the population.

As the international community faces more and more cases that require urgent and radical responses, international cooperation on policing to tackle organized crime will potentially likewise become more and more common. This makes it all the more important that the prospective MSS mission to Haiti is bestowed with clear and nuanced operational parameters from the outset.

Potential risks and challenges for the mission

The coalition of countries that have signalled a willingness to deploy personnel to the MSS mission – Kenya, a clutch of other African nations and CARICOM – undoubtedly have a huge task ahead. Such coalitions have been successful in the past,¹¹⁴ but there are risks. We break these risks down into four key categories – modalities for the use of force; avoiding a narrowly focused approach to buttressing the HNP; the pitfall of the criminal landscape evolving in response to the mission; and the danger of under-funding by the international community.

Firstly, operational parameters centring on the use of force should be firmly established ahead of deployment, including mechanisms to prevent collateral harm to civilians in the context of what amounts to urban warfare. This should extend to a clear definition of the rules of engagement, over and above the existing emphasis on detailed reporting to the UNSC.

Since the mission will very likely be involved in armed confrontation with major gangs, there is a clear risk of civilians getting caught in the crossfire. There is also the risk of erroneously targeting civilians due to difficulties in distinguishing gang members from non-gang members. Operations in gang-controlled areas require expertise in urban policing in hostile environments.

All this makes it crucial to engage in explicit planning for circumstances in which force is used, and how civilians will be protected under those scenarios. Likely scenarios for these joint operations should be carefully war gamed in advance.

Paragraph 5 of the resolution establishes that member states participating in the mission are authorized to take ‘all necessary measures’ to fulfil its mandate in strict compliance with international law and international human rights law. This is a clear call to limit the scope in the use of force, in accordance to human rights obligations. However, Paragraph 9 of the resolution appears to lack a clear definition of scope, since the leadership of the mission is to be given discretion over the resort to the use of force and the rules of engagement. Although this authorization of the use of force might be similar to other UN authorizations, the leeway for the use of force risks being excessive without the strict oversight of the UNSC. In that sense, the rules for engagement and deployment of force should be set out beforehand in strict observance of human rights law.

As experience demonstrates, heavily securitized police operations and responses to organized crime and criminal violence that are centred in narratives focusing on the ‘fight against crime’ can escalate violence and human rights abuses against civilians.¹¹⁵ Examples of police operations from across the world, including in the region, show that excessive use of force in policing is synonymous with severe human rights violations, including extra-judicial killings. Police operations can set in motion escalatory dynamics, as violent actions perpetrated by groups are often in response to states policies.

Secondly, there needs to be a strategic approach to buttressing the HNP and addressing high-level corruption within the police. The deployment of external police will not be effective without appropriate capacity building and resource allocation to the HNP. As we highlight above, many members of the HNP have either lost their lives in counter-gang efforts or are under-protected and at risk from the gangs, which has the potential to make them wary of engaging with the MSS mission. Coupled with systemic under-resourcing, poor supply chain management (including of weapons) and the absence of a national strategy for combating the gangs, the mission risks lacking a meaningful domestic security partner.

Efforts to strengthen the HNP should not overlook existing criminal relationships between officers and senior gang personnel. As noted, there are regular reports of police officers colluding with gangs or becoming gang members (including most notoriously Chérizier).¹¹⁶ Equally, police officers have an established history of engagement with vigilantes. The MSS mission should work to avoid the leakage of crucial and confidential information. In this context, there should be encouragement to the HNP to vet all its members and remove from service any officers who have colluded with gangs.¹¹⁷ Moreover, efforts to strengthen the HNP will not be fully effective without comprehensive engagement with the whole criminal justice chain – including the judiciary and the prison system. Currently, Haiti's judicial sector and penal system are highly dysfunctional. Haiti's prisons are over-crowded and conditions therein are dire. If the mission focuses largely on supporting the HNP in rounding up low-level gang members, the crisis in prisons and detention centres could escalate further.¹¹⁸ As noted by the Secretary General's report, the implementation of the national strategy on disarmament, dismantlement and reintegration and community violence reduction will be key elements to prevent bottlenecks in the criminal justice system and promote transitional justice.¹¹⁹

It is therefore critical that the international community work with Haiti's government to develop a realistic plan for comprehensive reform of the criminal justice system (HNP, judiciary and prisons), rather than pushing narrowly focused security sector reform. There may also be benefit in the international community conceptualizing responses to the judicial and penal bottlenecks creatively, such as the through the development of hybrid in-country tribunals for major criminals and the deployment of trained corrections personnel to support Haitian staff. There is also reason to focus on the risks of corruption within the MSS mission. This has long been a significant challenge for UN peacekeeping missions writ large, with regular accusations emerging of diversion and sale of logistical supplies, arms sales and bribe taking.¹²⁰ Further, while Kenyan police officers have often been on the front line of tough environments, and are versed in tackling gangs and terrorism, the force has struggled to address corruption within its ranks.¹²¹

Arguably, in an environment such as Haiti where the challenge involves criminal actors with a long history of strategically corrupting law enforcement, corruption risks are even more acute than normal peacekeeping deployments.

For these reasons, the MSS mission, and the UN more broadly, should explicitly develop plans to mitigate corruption risks and aggressively address instances of maleficence within its ranks. The requirement, detailed in the updated 2023 UN Sanctions mandate for Haiti, that the MSS report lost or stolen weapons to the Panel of Experts is an important step in addressing vulnerabilities.¹²² Another avenue to mitigate corruption risks should be the deployment of an empowered internal affairs policing unit as part of the MSS mission, with the capacity to initiate investigations of officers from any contributing country.

The third key risk is that the criminal ecosystem shifts in response to the arrival of the MSS mission. As the mission strengthens law enforcement and the state's capacity to respond to gangs on one side, it also risks reshaping the power dynamics of gangs. While introducing boots on the ground and armed personnel, the mission risks introducing more weapons and armed actors into the situation. This can have repercussions, such as giving gangs an incentive to further escalate their arsenals, or uniting them in a common front against the mission.¹²³

There is a need for diligent monitoring of the resolution's arms embargo to avoid triggering an arms race between gangs and police. Aligned with the sanctions regime, the resolution authorizing the MSS

mission strongly calls for a global ban on arms sales to Haiti, except to the UN or a UN-authorized mission or to a security force that operates under the command of Haiti's government.¹²⁴ This caveat inevitably allows for arms flow into the country and may increase the likelihood of diversion (with its potential human rights consequences, including armed violence against civilians).

As explored above, the prospective arrival of the international force has already seen gangs add to weapons stockpiles and prepare for combat. The UNSC's reauthorization of the Panel of Experts explicitly calls for information sharing between the MSS mission and Panel of Experts on the diversion of firearms. This would be key to curbing the proliferation of illicit firearms and in line with international commitments that member states may be signatories to, including the Arms Trade Treaty and the Firearms Protocol.

Fourth, to avoid the risk of the mission failing to gain traction on the ground, there needs to be strategic buy-in by the international community, especially in terms of ensuring logistical and financial support. Kenya has offered to supply a contingent of 1 000 officers, drawn from the Rapid Deployment Unit, Anti-Stock Theft Unit, General Service Unit and the Border Patrol Unit, which have extensive experience in peacekeeping operations.¹²⁵

The decision by Kenya's High Court on 26 January 2024 to designate the government's current deployment plan – which would have see the first troops arrive as early as February – as unconstitutional indicates that the MSS mission will take some months yet to get off the ground, and it has even sparked concerns that the mission could be stillborn.¹²⁶ However, in its ruling, the High Court noted that its decision was based at least in part on the absence of a 'reciprocal arrangement'¹²⁷ between the governments of Kenya and Haiti, suggesting that the conclusion of such an agreement could serve as path forwards.

More funding is arguably needed. The US has pledged to supply logistical and financial assistance of up to US\$200 million,¹²⁸ but will not deploy its security forces on the ground.¹²⁹ The United Nations will implement the trust fund called for by the UNSC as a vehicle to facilitate voluntary contributions to the mission by member states.

The 1 000 officers offered by Kenya is lower than the total size of previous multilateral interventions in Haiti.¹³⁰ However, other Caribbean countries, such as Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas and Jamaica, have also pledged support to the mission with an additional contingent of officers.¹³¹ Chad, Senegal and Burundi have also pledged personnel.¹³²

Ulrika Richardson, the UN's resident coordinator in Haiti, has stated that the force should be around 2 500 strong, though the composition has not been finalized.¹³³ That number would be half of what is arguably needed to create an impact (about 3 500 to 4 500 officers).¹³⁴ However, it is also important to bear in mind the shortfall in the HNP, which has far less operational capacity than it needs, as mentioned previously.

There is arguably a need for Kenya and the international community to think creatively about what mix of forces is needed. This in turn will depend on what the concept of operations is, and the resultant mix of forces required. If the aim is to tackle gangs directly in urban strongholds – akin to the role of MINUSTAH in 2008 – then requests for special tactics units and intelligence personnel are likely. However, if the goal is to address the criminal ecosystem and increase the logistical friction costs for gangs of procuring weapons and ammunition, a different mix of forces are needed, likely involving



Road in the Pétion-Ville district after heavy rains, November 2023. Photo: Romain Le Cour Grandmaison/GI-TOC

a mix of border security units, coast guard vessels and basic police units able to provide perimeter security of ports and protection to customs officers.

In any scenario, an emphasis should be placed on criminal intelligence capacity. This proved to be vital during the MINUSTAH era, and is likely even more salient in the present day, given the complexity of the current situation. Crucially, while most criminal intelligence staff deployed will likely be working on tactical issues, regular strategic analysis and scenario development will be crucial, in order to envision and stay ahead of any shifts in the criminal ecosystem.

During the likely lull caused by the High Court ruling in Kenya, time can be optimized and used to prepare and coordinate the mission. Close coordination of the MSS mission with the United Nations system in Haiti will be critical. This would include coordination with the BINUH and other agencies.

Finally, there needs to be efforts to synchronize the sanctions regime with the MSS mission. Even though the sanctions regime emerged in 2022, at roughly the same time that discussions on the mission gained ground, there is no specific language in Resolution 2699 (2023) dictating how the two strands of international effort in Haiti will intersect, how they can reinforce one another and what type of operational and political challenges will arise on the ground. There is a crucial need to reinforce coordination, given the shared peace and security objectives of both the sanctions regime and the mission, and the explicit focus of both on countering gangs and other criminal actors driving the current unrest.

The resolution hits the right note in acknowledging that the need to create a safe environment in Haiti goes beyond the MSS mission, and that financial support should be dedicated for long-term

economic, social and institutional development. Equally, the emphasis on a Haitian-led political process is laudable. Without promising long-term political or economic solutions through a Haitian-led process, the situation is likely to collapse back into chaos upon any withdrawal of the mission. Paraphrasing the former force commander of MINUSTAH, Brazilian Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, it would be an illusion to think that the solutions would come from outside Haiti.¹³⁵

One of the ways Haitian authorities can do this is by engaging with the sanctions regime. Arguably, there is a closer potential synergy between the MSS mission and the Sanctions Committee than in previous UN missions. The force is explicitly focused on supporting and assisting Haiti's police in addressing the harms and challenges generated by gangs. This is effectively a bottom-up policing mission, focused on limiting criminal activities such as economic predation, kidnapping and drug trafficking which fuel the gangs' power.

The Panel of Experts' report is blunt in noting that 'international sanctions alone cannot curb the current levels of armed violence.'¹³⁶ A strategic, well thought through approach is particularly important given the UN's often poor history of coordinating sanctions regimes, and linked panels of experts, with peace support operations. This has been traced to a variety of organizational issues, including limited communication and understanding by peace support forces of the work undertaken by UN panels of experts and sanctions committees, and siloing between different UN units.¹³⁷

These points echo GI-TOC research on sanctions against transnational organized crime, which details how sanctions generally work best when they are part of a broader strategy encompassing a suite of diplomatic, security and prosecutorial tools.¹³⁸ This underscores both the need for the force to receive timely analysis of the evolution of violent dynamics on the ground, to work in tandem with the Sanctions Committee and Panel of Experts to address worsening violence in Haiti, and the importance of strategically coordinating the diplomatic, security and prosecutorial elements. If properly coordinated, there is substantial benefit in building up ground-level policing, while pressing down through sanctions on criminals and elite enablers.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A carefully calibrated combination of approaches – building up policing and cooperation via the MSS force and pressing down via sanctions – thus has a substantial opportunity to shape the situation in a way that would be difficult to achieve individually.

Ensuring that the two strands of international response do work in tandem, however, will require proactive effort both on the part of MSS planners and Sanctions Committee representatives or the UN secretariat staff which support them. Some short-term recommendations follow below.

Coordination and planning between the MSS mission, Sanctions Committee and Panel of Experts

The first and arguably most important task involves preliminary meetings intended to establish a shared understanding of mandates, operational approaches and current objectives for each side. This should then lead to development of a joint plan on how the respective actors can work together. In part, this is a technical issue, identifying for example at which level MSS officials will interact with UN panel members and how information developed by these bodies can be shared. However, such planning should also detail a strategic vision of what international actors are trying to achieve via designations and the MSS mission and over what timeline.

There is arguably a need for radical practicality. It is likely that some gang leaders and political elites sanctioned by the UN and unilateral actors or arrested and detained by the mission may change their behaviour. However, full scale systemic change is unlikely to happen in the near term. Simply, gangs and organized crime have developed deep roots in many areas of the country over a long-time span, and expecting their full-scale demobilization or elimination is unrealistic. Because of this, it is more useful for the international community to focus on near term objectives, involving both sanctions and the MSS deployment, on more nuanced efforts, such as disrupting the ability of gang leaders to cause harms, increasing the friction costs of criminal activities, and deterring those facilitating or funding gang operations, in so doing impeding and weakening gangs' power and that of their backers.

Gangs throughout the country are also linked to, and often financially supported by, business and political actors. These elites are more difficult for the Haitian police to target, and will also likely pose a challenge for the MSS force. However, as has already been seen, sanctions and the threat of sanctions are both an instrument which can be used to target such powerful actors and one that already

has a degree of impact. Effectively, multilateral and unilateral sanctions can push down on targeted individuals who are crucial to the illicit economy and who would otherwise enjoy effective impunity.

While elite connections have ebbed in salience as a funding source for gangs, there is a risk that such connections can quickly be reactivated. Deterring elite engagement with gangs and altering norms should thus be a key strategic goal for the MSS mission and Sanctions Committee.

Target criminal ecosystems to counter gangs

Second, an explicit focus by the MSS mission and sanctions regime should be placed on pressuring and shaping Haiti's criminal ecosystem in order to systematically limit the power of gangs. An example is the ecosystem around trafficked weaponry. Currently, gangs enjoy ready access to weaponry and ammunition, smuggled in via ports and overland across the border with the Dominican Republic. In turn, the availability of weaponry shapes the willingness of gangs to use such weapons, whether to counter other gangs, coerce the HNP or – in the future – to counter efforts by the MSS force to stymie their operations. Addressing the broader criminal ecosystem within Haiti is thus essential, and may be more feasible for the force as its initial elements deploy, when manpower and field intelligence will likely be limited.

An ecosystem shaping approach should start with an emphasis on border security – both along the land border with the Dominican Republic and in Haiti's territorial waters (the Haitian coastguard is part of the HNP, effectively authorizing MSS maritime patrol operations) – in order to impede the entry of weapons and other contraband into Haiti. Further, it would entail perimeter protection of commercial seaports and security provision to customs officers, enabling more thorough and unimpeded searches of arriving cargo for guns and ammunition. Next, it should include targeted raids and arrests – including operations conducted in coordination with regional states – targeting weapons trafficking networks. Finally, it would involve the mapping of and comprehensive action against the financial networks underpinning weapons trafficking and sales, using both prosecutorial and sanctions-based approaches.

Expectations should be managed realistically: such approaches will not end weapons trafficking to Haiti, but they will increase the cost and difficulty of trafficking, which will in turn filter down to gangs. If replacement of guns and ammunition becomes difficult and expensive, this could in turn influence gang decision making on the use of force.

Expedite sanctions designations

Third, once the MSS concept of operations and deployment plan has been developed, the Sanctions Committee should move with greater speed on issuing further designations. Prioritization should be given to designation of actors in areas where the force will be deployed, ideally in a concentrated manner that focuses on disrupting the ecosystem of organized crime there. A concentrated, ecosystem-focused approach helps to offset the fact that many Haitian gang leaders have little external financial or travel exposure and are largely immune to such asset freezes and travel bans. Individuals may be insulated, but ecosystems are often not, and by knocking out exposed elements, it should be possible to constrain and weaken even the most insulated of internal actors.

As an example, if the mission deploys to Artibonite department, which after Port-au-Prince is the country's major hotspot for gang violence, sanctions designations should focus on the leaders of the Gran Grif, Kokorat San Ras, and the Coalition des Révolutionnaires pour Sauver l'Artibonite gangs, as well as the broader local criminal ecosystem, such as logistical enablers (particularly weapons traffickers) and the politicians and businessmen connected to the gangs.

Crucially, such a concentrated sanctions focus should continue even after the MSS force is on the ground. The mission, in conjunction with the HNP, should focus its efforts on targeting sanctioned gangs' operations on the ground, by means of targeted operations and arrests, as well as constraining their ability to operate, via patrolling and maintaining a presence in key areas.

Continually map criminal ecosystems

Fourth, while the Panel of Experts has done excellent initial work mapping out criminal ecosystems in Haiti, once the force is deployed and working closely with the HNP, it in turn will likely gather investigative leads and evidence on the nature of the local criminal ecosystem. Some of this information – particularly on higher level gang leaders, firearms trafficking or elites supporting them – should then be channelled towards further designations, either via information sharing with the Panel of Experts, or direct engagement with a member state on the Sanctions Committee, or engagement with states involved in unilateral designations in Haiti.

Such a concentrated approach offers the potential for substantial 'bottom-up/top-down' synergy and impact, albeit in a relatively constrained area. However, 'wins' in an area like Artibonite can have substantial signalling power to criminal actors and Haitian society more broadly, giving momentum to national and international efforts to address the most acute harms caused by criminal actors.

Ideally, countries involved in 'gold-plating' the UN regime should also be brought into the strategy in a concentrated manner. Their involvement could be critical given the more rapid pace of their designation processes, which would allow for a more rapid response to any shifts on the ground than the UN's Haiti Sanctions Committee would likely be able to achieve.

Human rights and community at the centre

Fifth, human rights and communities in Haiti should be at the centre of responses to organized crime and gangs in the country. Trust within communities can be gained by implementing human rights approaches when developing strategies to respond to the crisis. In this sense, the protection of civilians and the risk that the MSS mission could cause unintended harms and exacerbate human rights violations, particularly gender-based violations, need to be taken into account. The establishment and implementation of human rights standards and accountability mechanisms for the MSS mission are key to preventing such risks. Coordination with civil society, including women's rights groups, the UN Human Rights Office and other human rights monitoring mechanisms should also ensure that human rights are upheld.

Fine-tune and repeat messaging

Finally, once on the ground the MSS force and Sanctions Committee should be explicit, vocal and continuous in highlighting what they seek to achieve and what is beyond their mandate. They should be portrayed as a means of shaping a positive outcome for the Haitian people by addressing key impediments to peace. In particular, emphasis should be placed on conveying the message that sanctions are not an effort to punish designees, or a means of avoiding Haiti's law enforcement and judicial systems. Such explicit and repetitive messaging is key for sustaining the support of both Haitian and international public opinion, and in blunting efforts by spoilers to rally public support by claiming the international actions infringe Haiti's sovereignty and interests.



NOTES

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Haiti - Recession : Haiti's economy in free fall, -10.5% of GDP in total over 5 years

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The growing increase in violence, kidnappings and deaths caused by members of the nearly 300 gangs that control 80% of the capital Port-au-Prince, has not only negatively affected Haiti in 2023, but also the performance of its economy, whose production fell again for the fifth consecutive year.

The report, from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), Volker Türk, <https://www.haitilibre.com/en/news-39508-haiti-crisis-un-independent-experts-urge-the-haitian-government.html> reveals that at least 3,960 people have

been killed, 1,432 injured and 2,951 kidnapped in gang-related violence this year alone [i.e. 1 Haitian killed every 2 hours]...

At the same time, the Haitian Institute of Statistics and Informatics (IHSI) reports that in 2023 the gross domestic product (GDP) of Haiti (592.700 billion gourdes or ± 4 billion 482.08 million dollars) has plunged again of -1.9%.

5-year retrospective of GDP in Haiti:

2019 -1.7%
2020 -3.3%
2021 -1.8%
2022 -1.7%
2023 -1.9%

Or -10.4% in total over 5 years

In addition, Haiti displays double-digit inflation of 22.8% year-on-year <https://www.haitilibre.com/en/news-41090-haiti-economy-sharp-acceleration-in-inflation-+-34-in-1-month.html> (November 2023), one of the highest rates on the American continent (dominated by Venezuela 182%). Haiti ranks in the TOP 15 countries with high inflation globally.

The suspension of border trade for nearly 50 days, between September 13 and October 31, 2023, partly represents an impact on the Haitian economy, because **the Dominican Republic is Haiti's second trading partner after the United States**. During the 7 weeks of closure ProDominicana estimates revenue losses at \$140 million.

[iciHaiti - Social : The Ministry of Public Works building vandalized](#)

[iciHaiti - Cap-Haitien : First domestic flight from the Guy Maly terminal](#)

[iciHaiti - «Tuesday of the Nation» : Outline of the preliminary draft Constitution](#)

[iciHaiti - Gros-Morne : Towards the end of the ordeal of the residents of Rue Basse](#)

[iciHaiti - Tourism : Project to create an Integrated Tourist Zone](#)

[more news](#)



[Haiti - 30th Anniversary Celebration of the PNH : Rain of Messages](#)

[Haiti - Diaspora : The Minister of MHAVE in Chile](#)

[Haiti - 2026 World Cup : Final qualifying phase, our Grenadiers know their opponents](#)

[Haiti - FLASH : DHS revokes Biden stay Program and work authorizations](#)

[Haiti - News : Zapping...](#)

[more news](#)

The Wayback Machine - <https://web.archive.org/web/20250216172331/https://travel.gc.ca/desti...>



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Haiti travel advice



Avoid all travel

Latest updates: Safety and security – updated information on the Port-au-Prince airport

Last updated: January 3, 2025 09:08 ET

On this page

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- [Entry and exit requirements](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Laws and culture](#)
- [Natural disasters and climate](#)
- [Need help?](#)



Risk level

Haiti - Avoid all travel

Avoid all travel to Haiti due to the threat posed by kidnappings, gang violence and the potential for civil unrest throughout the country.

If you are in Haiti, register or update your personal information through the [Registration of Canadians Abroad](#) service and encourage other Canadian citizens in Haiti to do so.

Make sure your travel documents and those of your eligible family members are up to date and secure at all times.

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Safety and security

Ongoing violence and the state of emergency

A countrywide state of emergency is in effect in response to ongoing gang violence.

Toussaint-Louverture airport in Port-au-Prince has reopened although with limited operations. Most airlines have suspended their flights to and from Port-au-Prince until further notice. Confirm the status of your flight with your airline before going to the airport.

More information on [states of emergency](#) and [airport access](#)

Border closure with the Dominican Republic

On March 5, 2024, the Government of the Dominican Republic closed its air border with Haiti. Land and sea borders between the two countries remain closed to travellers.

The Embassy of Canada to Haiti, in Port-au-Prince, cannot help you enter the Dominican Republic from Haiti.

Crime

Overview

The security situation remains extremely volatile in Haiti. Gang violence is high in Port-au-Prince and in Artibonite Department. There are frequent clashes between gangs and security forces. Armed gangs control most of Port-au-Prince. Vigilante groups violently attack and kill alleged gang members.

Police have very limited resources to respond and help. If you are currently in Haiti, your personal safety is at risk. If you can do so safely, consider leaving the country by commercial means.

If you are in Haiti:

- shelter in a safe place until the situation has stabilized
- ensure that you have essential supplies, including food, water and fuel
- ensure that your passport and other travel documents are up-to-date and secure at all times
- limit your movements, if you are unable to shelter in place
- avoid crossing road blockades, even if they appear unattended
- maintain a low profile when going outside
- always exercise extreme caution

Violent crime

Violent crime is common, including:

- kidnappings

- gender-based violence
- murders
- armed robberies
- car jackings

Home invasions are frequent. These incidents generally occur in middle-class neighbourhoods and in affluent neighbourhoods in Port-au-Prince and outside Pétion-Ville.

Criminality often occurs in certain periods such as:

- the holiday season in December
- carnival in February or March
- the beginning of the school year in late August or early September

Foreigners are viewed as wealthy and may arouse envy. To avoid becoming a target:

- don't show signs of affluence
- be aware of your surroundings at all times
- keep your personal belongings, including your passport and other travel documents, in a secure place
- remain cautious with new acquaintances offering friendship or hospitality
- never walk alone and avoid travelling after dark

Petty crime

Petty crime, such as pickpocketing and purse snatching, occurs frequently.

States of emergency

The Haitian government frequently declares regional states of emergency due to the deteriorating security situation. A state of emergency allows the military to assist police forces in responding to security incidents. Authorities may impose a curfew during a state of emergency.

When a state of emergency is in effect, security forces have increased rights to:

- restrict freedom of movement
- conduct searches and seizures
- confiscate unregistered vehicles
- detain persons of interest

While the state of emergency is in effect:

- follow the instructions of local authorities
- always cooperate with police officers
- always carry valid identification and be prepared for various checkpoints
- monitor local media for the latest information

Greater Port-au-Prince area

Several areas in greater Port-au-Prince continue to be dangerous due to criminal activity and kidnappings. Local authorities may have difficulties assisting during an emergency in these areas:

- Artibonite Central
- Bas-Delmas
- Bel Air
- Carrefour
- Carrefour Drouillard
- Champs-de-Mars

- Cité Soleil
- Croix-des-Bouquets
- Downtown Port-au-Prince
- Fontamara
- Jalousie
- Laboule 12
- Martissant
- Portail Léogane
- Road to the airport
- Santo
- Tabarre
- Torcelle
- Toussant Brave

Police presence is not guaranteed in these areas and your personal safety might be at risk. Due to the local environment, security forces may not be able to provide emergency assistance in due time.

If you must travel to these areas, it's imperative that you take appropriate security precautions:

- be vigilant at all times when moving about the city, towns and country
- ensure that your local contacts know when to expect you and your travel plans within these areas
- ask your local contacts to guide you in your travels
- keep windows closed and doors locked when travelling by car
- never use public transport of any kind
- ask the organizations, institutes or hosts that are taking care of you about the latest updates on the region to which you are travelling, since the security situation can change at any moment

- avoid going out after nightfall
- follow the advice of local authorities

Pétion-Ville

Armed robberies occur regularly in Pétion-Ville. In most cases, armed thieves on motorcycles attack their victims in broad daylight. Attacks have been increasing, particularly against motorists. They usually occur in traffic jams during peak hours.

- Be vigilant at all times while travelling
- Keep windows closed and doors locked when travelling by car

Main highways and roads

Armed gangs have set up roadblocks to commit robberies and demand payments along Route Nationale 2 from Martissant to Miragoane.

Armed gangs are fighting to control the main highways connecting Port-au-Prince to northern departments.

If you must drive:

- limit your movements
- avoid crossing road blockades, even if they appear unattended
- allow extra time to reach your destination

Airports

There are two international airports in the country, which can be difficult to access due to the highly volatile security situation.

You are strongly advised against road travel from Port-au-Prince to Cap-Haitien, given the presence of gangs and the highly volatile security situation. You may need to change your travel plans with little notice.

Thieves try to distract foreigners to steal their passports at Toussaint Louverture International Airport.

- Be cautious when claiming your luggage upon arrival
- Keep your valuables and identification on you
- Have your local contacts arrange for your pick-up from the airport
- Carry only small amounts of cash
- Don't resist if you're threatened by robbers
- Be extremely vigilant when leaving the airport

Border with the Dominican Republic

The security environment is highly volatile at the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Criminal activities are widespread near the border with the Dominican Republic. Armed gangs operate along the border controlling many of the roads leading to the border.

Border areas with the Dominican Republic are subject to gang operations, including the following areas:

- Malpasse
- Ouanaminthe

Robberies in bank areas

Some criminals wait near banks, watching clients, and attempt to rob them when they leave.

There is also a higher risk of robbery from individuals using bank ATMs.

- Be extremely vigilant when entering or leaving a bank
- Only use ATMs inside a hotel or supermarket
- Deal directly with a teller if you are at a bank

- Avoid carrying large sums of money

Kidnappings

Kidnappings are common.

Kidnappers target both local people and foreigners, including dual citizens who live or travel in Haiti, regardless of rank or social class. Missionaries, aid workers and children can become victims. Most of the victims are released in exchange for ransom. In some exceptional cases, however, victims have disappeared or have been killed.

- Remain alert to small groups of loiterers, especially near your residence
- Keep doors and windows secure at all times
- Instruct domestic staff to permit into your home only pre-authorized visitors whose identities have been verified
- Keep all visitors under close scrutiny
- Remain extremely vigilant wherever you are in the country

Demonstrations

Demonstrations and civil unrest take place frequently.

Due to ongoing political instability, some demonstrations have turned violent. Protesters have set up roadblocks across the country and blocked the access to the airport. In those circumstances, water, food and fuel shortages could occur.

Even peaceful demonstrations can turn violent at any time. They can also lead to disruptions to traffic and public transportation.

- Avoid areas where demonstrations and large gatherings are taking place

- Follow the instructions of local authorities
- Monitor local media for information on ongoing demonstrations

Mass gatherings (large-scale events).

Women's safety

Crimes committed against women frequently occur in Haiti. Reports of rape and assault against women and children have increased. Attackers sometimes act in groups.

Advice for women travellers

Service outages and supply shortages

Power outages are frequent, and shortages of essential supplies such as water and fuel occur.

Ensure that you plan adequately in case of outages and supply shortages.

Road safety

Road conditions and road safety are poor throughout the country due to:

- narrow and poorly maintained roads
- insufficient traffic signs, traffic lights and road markings
- high rates of driving while impaired, with the vehicle's lights off
- poor vehicle maintenance
- inadequate street lighting

Heavy rains can hamper overland travel and reduce the provision of essential services. Roads may become impassable and bridges damaged.

If you need to travel within Haiti, consider hiring a driver through a reputable agency or hotel. If you must drive:

- always keep your fuel tanks at least half full, as disruptions of fuel supplies are frequent
- always carry a cell phone and a list of emergency contact numbers with you, as roadside assistance services are deficient
- keep in mind that cell phone coverage may be intermittent in some rural areas
- avoid driving at night or in bad weather, even in the city
- be cautious about abandoned vehicle beside the road
- watch out for pedestrians and stray animals on the road

Public transportation

Public transportation is unsafe and unreliable. Drivers don't always respect traffic laws. Vehicles are often in poor condition or overloaded, which leads to serious accidents involving injuries and sometimes death.

You should avoid all public transportation in Haiti, but most specifically trucks converted into buses, known as "tap taps."

Ferries

Ferry accidents occur and are often caused by poor safety practices or extreme weather conditions.

You should avoid ferry travel. If you choose to travel by ferry:

- make sure the vessel you are boarding is carrying appropriate safety equipment
- make sure that life jackets are provided for all passengers and accessible at all times
- avoid boarding vessels that appear overloaded or unseaworthy

- verify the safety standards of ferries with your tour operator

Air travel

We do not make assessments on the compliance of foreign domestic airlines with international safety standards.

[Information about foreign domestic airlines](#)

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Entry and exit requirements

Every country or territory decides who can enter or exit through its borders. The Government of Canada cannot intervene on your behalf if you do not meet your destination's entry or exit requirements.

We have obtained the information on this page from the Haitian authorities. It can, however, change at any time.

Verify this information with the [Foreign Representatives in Canada](#).

Passport

Entry requirements vary depending on the type of passport you use for travel.

Before you travel, check with your transportation company about passport requirements. Its rules on passport validity may be more stringent than the country's entry rules.

Regular Canadian passport

Your passport must be valid for the expected duration of your stay in Haiti.

Passport for official travel

Different entry rules may apply.

Official travel

Passport with “X” gender identifier

While the Government of Canada issues passports with an “X” gender identifier, it cannot guarantee your entry or transit through other countries. You might face entry restrictions in countries that do not recognize the “X” gender identifier. Before you leave, check with the closest foreign representative for your destination.

Other travel documents

Different entry rules may apply when travelling with a temporary passport or an emergency travel document. Before you leave, check with the closest foreign representative for your destination.

Useful links

- [Foreign Representatives in Canada](#)
- [Canadian passports](#)

Visas

Tourist visa: not required for stays up to 90 days

Business visa: not required

Student visa: required

Work permit: required

Residency permit

You must obtain a residency permit if you intend to stay for 90 days or more. This requirement doesn't apply to Canadians of Haitian origin.

If you plan to extend your stay beyond 90 days and are a Canadian of non-Haitian origin, you must apply to the Haitian Immigration Service before the 90 days have expired. If you fail to do so, you will need an exit visa to leave the country.

Canadian investors, exporters/importers and workers must apply to the Haitian Immigration Service for a residency permit through their employer for stays of 6 months or more. You must obtain this document before leaving Canada.

[How to obtain a visa](#) - Embassy of Haiti in Canada (in French)

Other entry requirements

Customs officials may ask you to show them a return or onward ticket and proof of sufficient funds to cover your stay.

Children and travel

Learn more about [travelling with children](#).

Yellow fever

Learn about [potential entry requirements related to yellow fever](#) (vaccines section).

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Health



Relevant Travel Health Notices

- [Global Measles Notice](#) - 13 March, 2024

- COVID-19 and International Travel - 13 March, 2024

This section contains information on possible health risks and restrictions regularly found or ongoing in the destination. Follow this advice to lower your risk of becoming ill while travelling. Not all risks are listed below.

Consult a health care professional or visit a travel health clinic preferably 6 weeks before you travel to get personalized health advice and recommendations.

Routine vaccines

Be sure that your routine vaccinations, as per your province or territory, are up-to-date before travelling, regardless of your destination.

Some of these vaccinations include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, varicella (chickenpox), influenza and others.

Pre-travel vaccines and medications

You may be at risk for preventable diseases while travelling in this destination. Talk to a travel health professional about which medications or vaccines may be right for you, based on your destination and itinerary.

► Yellow Fever - Country Entry Requirements

► Hepatitis A

► Measles

► Hepatitis B

► COVID-19

► Influenza

► Malaria

► Rabies

Safe food and water precautions

Many illnesses can be caused by eating food or drinking beverages contaminated by bacteria, parasites, toxins, or viruses, or by swimming or bathing in contaminated water.

- Learn more about food and water precautions to take to avoid getting sick by visiting our [eat and drink safely abroad](#) page.

Remember: Boil it, cook it, peel it, or leave it!

- Avoid getting water into your eyes, mouth or nose when swimming or participating in activities in freshwater (streams, canals, lakes), particularly after flooding or heavy rain. Water may look clean but could still be polluted or contaminated.
- Avoid inhaling or swallowing water while bathing, showering, or swimming in pools or hot tubs.

► Cholera

► Travellers' diarrhea

► Typhoid

Insect bite prevention

Many diseases are spread by the bites of infected insects such as mosquitoes, ticks, fleas or flies. When travelling to areas where infected insects may be present:

- Use insect repellent (bug spray) on exposed skin
- Cover up with light-coloured, loose clothes made of tightly woven materials such as nylon or polyester
- Minimize exposure to insects
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in buildings that are not fully enclosed

To learn more about how you can reduce your risk of infection and disease caused by bites, both at home and abroad, visit our [insect bite prevention](#) page.

Find out what types of insects are present where you're travelling, when they're most active, and the symptoms of the diseases they spread.

► Chikungunya

► Dengue

► Zika virus

Animal precautions

Some infections, such as [rabies](#) and influenza, can be shared between humans and animals. Certain types of activities may increase your chance of contact with animals, such as travelling in rural or forested areas, camping, hiking, and visiting wet markets (places where live animals are slaughtered and sold) or caves.

Travellers are cautioned to avoid contact with animals, including dogs, livestock (pigs, cows), monkeys, snakes, rodents, birds, and bats, and to avoid eating undercooked wild game.

Closely supervise children, as they are more likely to come in contact with animals.

Person-to-person infections

Stay home if you're sick and practise proper cough and sneeze etiquette, which includes coughing or sneezing into a tissue or the bend of your arm, not your hand. Reduce your risk of colds, the flu and other illnesses by:

- washing your hands often
- avoiding or limiting the amount of time spent in closed spaces, crowded places, or at large-scale events (concerts, sporting events, rallies)
- avoiding close physical contact with people who may be showing symptoms of illness

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV, and mpox are spread through blood and bodily fluids; use condoms, practise safe sex, and limit your number of sexual partners. Check with your local public health authority pre-travel to determine your eligibility for mpox vaccine.

► Tuberculosis

► HIV

Medical services and facilities

Health care is inadequate throughout the country. There are few hospitals, and many are closed. Clinics and hospitals that are open are easily overwhelmed. Hospital services can be disrupted by gang violence

Ambulances are also limited and may not have the basic required medical supplies onboard. As a result, emergency response is not guaranteed.

Physicians and hospitals generally expect immediate cash payment for care even if you have proof of valid travel health insurance. You will have to pay the full amount of the bill before your departure.

Medications sold in Haiti may be of inferior quality to those available in Canada. Pharmacies may carry expired medications while some medications may simply not be available.

Bring a sufficient supply of medications for the duration of your stay.

Medical evacuation can be very expensive and you may need it in case of serious illness or injury.

Make sure you get travel insurance that includes coverage for medical evacuation and hospital stays.

Health and safety outside Canada

Keep in Mind...

The decision to travel is the sole responsibility of the traveller. The traveller is also responsible for his or her own personal safety.

Be prepared. Do not expect medical services to be the same as in Canada. Pack a travel health kit, especially if you will be travelling away from major city centres.



Laws and culture

You must abide by local laws.

Learn about what you should do and how we can help if you are [arrested or detained abroad](#).

Legal fees can be very high and judicial procedures are slow. Some Canadians have experienced an over a year detention period before being sent to trial. Prison conditions are extremely difficult. Penal facilities are overcrowded, unsanitary and under-resourced.

Drugs

Penalties for possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs are severe. Convicted offenders can expect lengthy legal proceedings, heavy jail sentences and fines.

[Drugs, alcohol and travel](#)

Dual citizenship

Dual citizenship is legally recognized in Haiti.

If you are a Canadian citizen, but also a citizen of Haiti, our ability to offer you consular services may be limited while you're there. You may also be subject to different [entry/exit requirements](#).

[Dual citizens](#)

International Child Abduction

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction is an international treaty. It can help parents with the return of children who have been removed to or retained in certain countries in violation of custody rights. It does not apply between Canada and Haiti.

If your child was wrongfully taken to, or is being held in Haiti by an abducting parent:

- act as quickly as you can
- consult a lawyer in Canada and in Haiti to explore all the legal options for the return of your child
- report the situation to the nearest Canadian government office abroad or to Global Affairs Canada by calling the Emergency Watch and Response Centre

If your child was removed from a country other than Canada, consult a lawyer to determine if The Hague Convention applies.

Be aware that Canadian consular officials cannot interfere in private legal matters or in another country's judicial affairs.

Useful links

- [International Child Abductions: A guide for affected parents](#)
- [Children and travel](#)
- [Canadian embassies and consulates by destination](#)
- [Request emergency assistance](#)

2SLGBTQI+ persons

Haitian law does not prohibit sexual acts between individuals of the same sex.

However, 2SLGBTQI+ persons could be discriminated against based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics.

Travel and your sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics

Driving

In order to fight insecurity, local authorities have temporarily forbidden to drive vehicles with tinted windows throughout the country.

You may use your Canadian driver's licence to drive in Haiti for up to 3 months. For stays of 3 months or more, you will require a Haitian driver's permit.

You should carry an international driving permit.

International Driving Permit

Photography

People may feel exploited or insulted by being subjects of photography in poor or urban areas.

Obtain permission before photographing individuals.

Donations

Donations entering the country are subject to import rules. They could be seized and taxed in accordance with local legislation. This includes:

- clothing
- new or used material goods
- personal care products
- medications

Contact the Embassy of the Republic of Haiti or one of its consulates before sending goods to Haiti.

Money

The currency in Haiti is the Haitian gourde (HTG).

Although all prices should be in gourde since March 2018, they are still often quoted in Haitian dollars (5 gourdes = 1 Haitian dollar) or in U.S. dollars.

Canadian currency is not accepted. Most leading hotels accept major credit cards. You can also use your Canadian bank cards to access funds from some ATMs, but the withdrawal limit is much lower than in Canada. Haitian ATMs are unreliable and you should not depend upon them in emergency situations.

Make sure to have sufficient cash in case you're unable to access an ATM or use your credit card.

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Natural disasters and climate

Hurricane season

Hurricanes usually occur from mid-May to the end of November. During this period, even small tropical storms can quickly develop into major hurricanes.

These severe storms can put you at risk and hamper the provision of essential services. You could face serious safety risks during a hurricane.

If you decide to travel to a coastal area during the hurricane season:

- be prepared to change your travel plans on short notice, including cutting short or cancelling your trip
- stay informed of the latest regional weather forecasts
- carry emergency contact information for your airline or tour operator
- follow the advice and instructions of local authorities

Useful links

- [Severe storms outside Canada](#)
- [Large-scale emergencies outside Canada](#)
- [Active storm tracking and hurricane watches and warnings](#) – U.S. National Hurricane Center

Rainy season

The rainy season extends from April to June and from October to November. It can lead to severe flooding.

Seasonal flooding can hamper overland travel and reduce the provision of essential services. Roads may become impassable due to mudslides and landslides. Bridges, buildings, and infrastructure may be damaged.

- Monitor local media for the latest updates, including those on road conditions
- Stay away from flooded areas
- Monitor weather reports
- Follow the instructions of local authorities, including evacuation orders

Earthquakes and tsunamis

Haiti is located in an active seismic zone. Earthquakes occur. Tsunamis can also affect coastal areas.

A tsunami can occur within minutes of a nearby earthquake. However, the risk of tsunami can remain for several hours following the first tremor. If you're staying on the coast, familiarize yourself with the region's evacuation plans in the event of a tsunami warning.

In the event of an earthquake:

- monitor local media for the latest information
- follow the instructions of local authorities

Useful links

- [Earthquakes – What to Do?](#)
- [Tsunami alerts](#) – U.S. Tsunami Warning System
- [Latest earthquakes](#) – U.S. Geological Survey

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Need help?

Local services

▶ [Emergency services](#)

Consular assistance

-  For consular assistance, contact the Embassy of Canada to Haiti, in Port-au-Prince, by phone or email.

► **Port-au-Prince** - Embassy of Canada

For emergency consular assistance, call the Embassy of Canada to Haiti, in Port-au-Prince, and follow the instructions. At any time, you may also call the Emergency Watch and Response Centre in Ottawa.

Useful links

 [Register as a Canadian abroad](#)

 [View travel insurance information](#)

 [Read our Traveller's Checklist](#)

Disclaimer

The decision to travel is your choice and you are responsible for your personal safety abroad. We take the safety and security of Canadians abroad very seriously and provide credible and timely information in our Travel Advice to enable you to make well-informed decisions regarding your travel abroad.

The content on this page is provided for information only. While we make every effort to give you correct information, it is provided on an "as is" basis without warranty of any kind, expressed or implied. The

Government of Canada does not assume responsibility and will not be liable for any damages in connection to the information provided.

If you need consular assistance while abroad, we will make every effort to help you. However, there may be constraints that will limit the ability of the Government of Canada to provide services.

Learn more about [consular services](#).

Date modified:

2025-01-03

TRAVEL

FAA extends US flight ban to Haiti's capital through summer 2025



BY THE HAITIAN TIMES
MAR. 12, 2025

 The entrance of Toussaint Louverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince. Photo by Guérinault Louis for the Haitian Times

The entrance of Toussaint Louverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince. Photo by Guérinault Louis for the Haitian Times

Overview:

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has extended its ban on U.S. flights to Port-au-Prince until September 8, 2025, citing ongoing security risks from armed gangs. The restriction, which affects major airlines like American, Spirit, and JetBlue, keeps Haiti's capital cut off from direct commercial flights during the busy summer travel season. Meanwhile, Haitian authorities are expanding regional airports to maintain international access.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has extended its ban on U.S. flights to Port-au-Prince until Sept. 8, 2025, keeping Haiti's capital cut off from American air carriers through the busy summer travel season.

The FAA first imposed the ban in November 2024 after gunfire hit three U.S. planes attempting to land. While flights were later allowed to Cap-Haïtien and five other northern airports, the FAA says gang violence in Port-au-Prince remains too dangerous for commercial air travel. The restrictions were set to expire on March 12, but officials decided the risks were still too high.

Since the initial FAA ban, major airlines, including American Airlines, Spirit Airlines, and JetBlue, have suspended flights to Haiti indefinitely, citing security concerns. In a March 6 statement, JetBlue confirmed that flights to Port-au-Prince would remain halted until at least June 11, 2025.

“Our top priority remains the safety and well-being of our customers and crew members,” a JetBlue spokesperson told *The Miami Herald*. “Due to the ongoing civil unrest in Haiti, we have made the decision to suspend all flights to and from the country through at least June 11, 2025.”


Only limited air travel options remain

With Port-au-Prince’s main airport effectively closed to commercial flights, Haiti’s government has shifted focus to regional airports to maintain international travel access. The Cap-Haïtien International Airport remains the only option for direct commercial flights between Haiti and the United States, operated by Sunrise Airways and other small carriers.

In early March, Haitian authorities announced that the Antoine Simon Airport in Les Cayes had completed a runway extension, allowing it to receive international flights. A similar expansion at Jacmel’s airport was finalized in January 2025.

Les Cayes airport upgrade sparks hope—but is it enough for Haiti’s Great South?

Haitian officials completed the long-delayed step by expanding the airport runway from 1,350 to 1,850 meters and making it possible to accommodate aircraft with 50 to 80 passengers.

 Les Cayes airport upgrade sparks hope—but is it enough for Haiti’s Great South?



BY JUHAKENSON BLAISE AND FRITZNEL D. OCTAVE MAR. 06, 2025

These measures do not fully compensate for the loss of commercial flights to the capital, which remains the country’s primary economic hub and home to millions of residents who rely on air travel for business, medical treatment, and family reunifications.

Diplomatic efforts and security concerns

U.S. and Haitian officials have discussed possible steps to restore commercial air travel safely, but no concrete timeline has been established. Earlier this month, U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Dennis Hankins met with Haiti’s National Office of Civil Aviation Director, Réginald Guignard, to discuss securing the perimeter of Toussaint Louverture International Airport.

While the airport remains closed to commercial traffic, it still receives military and diplomatic flights, including those related to the Kenya-led multinational security mission, which is expected to deploy forces to Haiti to help combat gang violence.

As the Sept. 8 deadline approaches, the FAA is expected to reevaluate the security situation before making another decision on the flight ban. In the meantime, Haitians seeking to travel abroad will have to rely on regional airports or alternative routes through the Dominican Republic or the Bahamas—an added financial and logistical burden.

Pingback:

Deported to Danger: Haiti's Continued Struggle Against Gang Violence – Lennon S Poly Global Scholars Blog

Agledor mackenson

Mar. 13, 2025 at 6:50 pm

Straight death sentence...it.s not fair althou life is never fair..

After they imprison you for several months

When you get here...Donald trump's pays the Haitian government 10thousand per deporty to accept them...

Loading...

Love

Mar. 13, 2025 at 9:10 pm

Thank God .At the moment P-au- p is a condemned city. It's important to keep people from getting killed there for now.

Loading...

Arold Richard

Jul. 29, 2025 at 10:40 pm

Just shut up if you don't have nothing better to say

Loading...

Gina

Mar. 14, 2025 at 6:48 pm

That's not fair to close the airport for that long in pap

Loading...

Islande

Mar. 23, 2025 at 5:58 pm

it's not really not fair. Haiti at least the should have leave one airport

Loading...

Pingback:

A Eulogy for the Prince

Neg mawon

Jun. 29, 2025 at 4:14 pm

You have flights, happening in war zone, Israel airport never close while fighting Hamas or Hezbollah rockets flying every where airport stay open, gun shots in Haiti airport close for a year stop it .

Loading...

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